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From Crypt and Choir

From Crypt and Choir

BY

LOUIS ALEXANDER ROBERTSON

AUTHOR OF

The Dead Calypso, Beyond the Requiems
and Cloistral Strains



A. M. Robertson

San Francisco

1904

GENERAL.

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by

LOUIS ALEXANDER ROBERTSON

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To
James D. Coleman

MUTE TYPE OF PATIENT FORTITUDE

(To the Tree)

*Oft hast thou bent before the gale,
And heard the tempests 'round thee roar;
Oft hast thou found their fury fail,
As down on thee the demons bore.
They wounded thee in many a war,
But still thou standest unsubdued,
To battle with them as before,
Mute Type of Patient Fortitude.*

*Though vainly they thy strength assail,
Of scars they gave thee many a score;
Though thou art armored with the mail
That fiercer onslaughts may ignore,
Still many a limb from thee they tore,
And on the plain their plunder strewed—
Trophies that Time cannot restore,
Mute Type of Patient Fortitude.*

*The pleasant pathways of the vale.
Let sighing Strephon still explore;
Yea, he may have the flowery dale,
And fair-faced Phyllis there adore;
Thy silent shade to me means more,
There oft in melancholy mood,
I stroll to learn thy saving lore,
Mute Type of Patient Fortitude.*

ENVOY

*To calm, blue skies I see thee soar,
Forgetful of the Borean brood
Harked on by thunder-throated Thor,
Mute Type of Patient Fortitude.*

From Crypt and Choir

From crypt and choir these rhymes are
penned,

For grief and gladness in them blend.

There is a cell beneath Song's
lane,

Where many a prisoner of pain
Hath found the Muse his closest
friend.

Above his couch she comes to bend,

She teaches him to make and mend

The psalm he sues her to obtain
From crypt and choir.

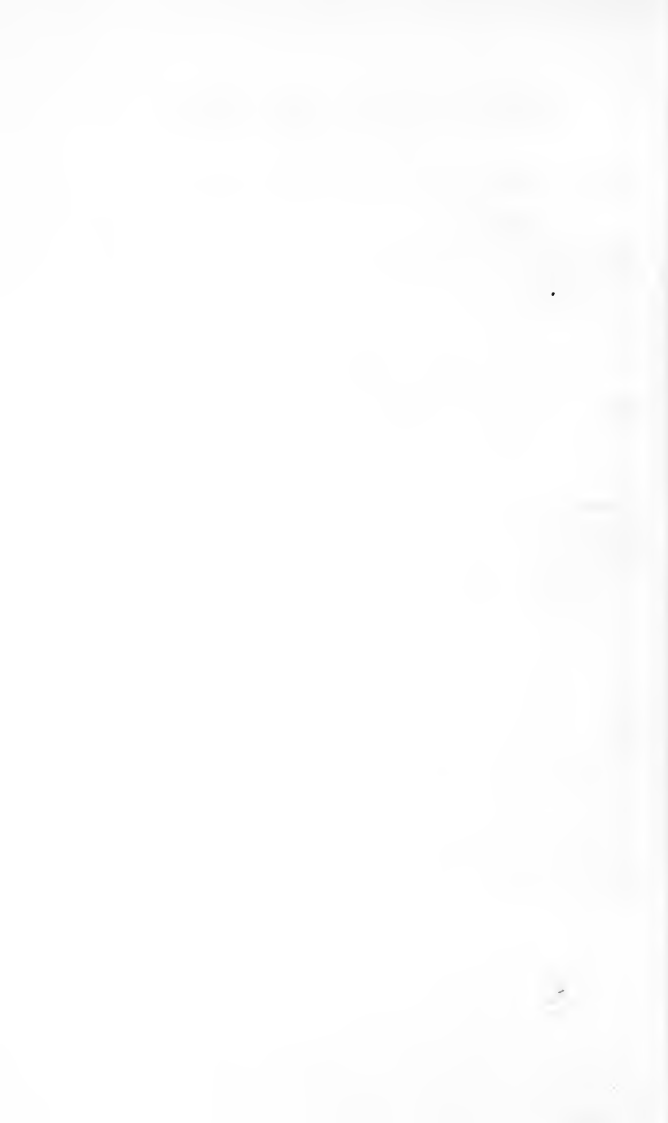
She makes the organ's thunder rend

His raftered roof; the tones descend

And flood the dungeon with their
strain;

But unto her he turns to gain

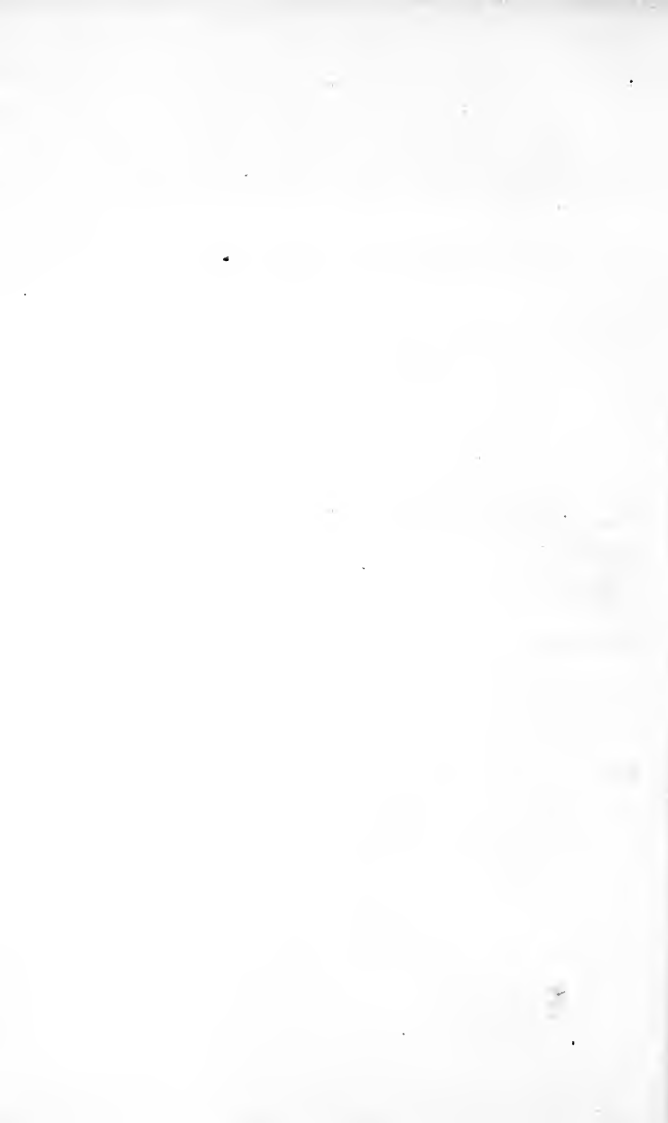
The calmer chords she loves to lend
From crypt and choir.



CONTENTS

The Crust of Content.....	15
The Sequoias	16
The Burning of Care	17
The Songs of Sorrow	19
Lines to Daniel O'Connell	21
The Promised Peace	22
Protean Zeus	27
Helen	28
Proserpina	29
Eurydice	30
The Pigmy Shouldn't Play the Giant's Game.	31
To Rudyard Kipling	33
We Must Sit Silent When the Devil Drives...	36
Give a Beggar a Horse and He'll Gallop to Hell	38
The Swoon	41
The Tearful Troth	43
These Dreary Days	45
Phryne	47
The Crowning Charm	54
Happy Days	56

From Crypt and Choir



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FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

THE CRUST OF CONTENT

He, who for some great aim hath never sought
More than life's stern demands to satisfy,
Climbs closer to the gods, whose needs are
naught,

Than he whose sordid soul doth multiply
The millions which he vainly dreams will buy
The calm content that gold hath never bought;
Croesus to Solon this confessed when brought,
Bankrupt and conquered, to the stake to die.

The crust that balks the wolf may sometimes
seem

Sweet as the manna in the wilderness;
'Tis when the soul forgets the flesh to stray
Where, in the realm of some harmonious dream,
It listens to the whispered words that bless,
And learns the charm that chides the world
away.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

THE SEQUOIAS

Like to the kingly Saul, whose towering crest
Rose midst the hosts of Israel without peer,
So we behold the great Sequoias rear
Their cloud-kissed crowns of glory in the West.
And thus they stood, when on the Virgin's breast
The longed-for Shiloh slept at last, while near,
The Shepherds and the Magi round him pressed—
Their offerings to the infant Christ to bear.

Where are the Syrian cedars of that day?
Gone, as the breeze that bent their boughs is
gone;
Yet these great trees, triumphant over time,
Stand as they stood, defiant of decay,
As when they watched the Saviour's birthday
dawn,
And heard the stars their Maker's music
chime.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

THE BURNING OF CARE

However fair the day may dawn, when in the
dark it dies,

There seems to roll above the gloom a requiem
of sighs.

And yet there is no night so long, but morning
with it brings

The faith that gives the soul again Hope's new
unwearied wings.

Then swift it soars to where it sees some glow-
ing haven gleam,

And lark-like cleaves the melting mists to clasp
the luring dream.

Sometimes we realize the dream, and for a mo-
ment live

Within the calm content and peace the world can
never give.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

Oh, if that moment and its bliss we could one day
detain,

Then Eden's garden glades were ours to wander
through again.

The best philosophy is that which lets the Pres-
ent cast

A curtain o'er the dreary days and doings of the
Past;

That trusts the Future with a faith that would
not fear to look

On every pale or pregnant page of its mysteri-
ous book.

These are the musings which are wont to come
to us tonight,

As here we stand to fling again with our accus-
tomed rite,

The burden of our griefs and groans upon the
pyre of Care,

And watch it vanish in the flames that feed upon
it there.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

THE SONGS OF SORROW

By the Babylonian rivers Israel's children sat
and wept,
On the willows that drooped near them hung the
harps they oft had swept;
And their captors came and mocked them and
commanded them to sing,
In their grief, the songs of Sion and the City of
their king.

But they sat in silent sorrow, and they thought of
other days,
Or but sadly sang in undertones the great Jeho-
vah's praise;
And their harps hung idly by them, and their eyes
were filled with tears,
And the present only mocked them as they
thought of other years.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

So the singer who has suffered does not often
touch the strings

Till they tremble into gladness, for the present
o'er him flings

A deep shadow, all the darker, when of the past
he dreams,

Then the song that sounds his sorrow, unto him
the sweetest seems.

Thus the many mournful measures, which we
chide, their sadness owe

To some heart that dreams in darkness of the
days of long ago;

But oft like a benediction on some sufferer they
fall,

For the songs that soothe our sorrows are the
sweetest songs of all.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

LINES SPOKEN WHILE PLACING A
WREATH UPON THE MEMORIAL
SEAT ERECTED TO DANIEL
O'CONNELL IN SAUSALITO

The wreath we bring and lay with loyal hand
Upon the stone which crowns the spot where
thou

So oft hast wandered in the past to stand
Where we, who honor thee, are gathered now;

This wreath will fade ere scarce a day hath fled,
But 'round thy brow are bound the living leaves
That seat the Singer with the Deathless Dead—
The few whose laurels Fame not often weaves.

Thy lips are mute; but each melodious strain
Thy fancy conjured from the vibrant chords,
Lives in our love, there ever to remain
Among the dearest treasures Memory hoards.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

THE PROMISED PEACE

It is the season when we turn again
The pages of the past and pause to read
Of One who gave unto the sons of men,
Long years ago, the best and purest creed
That ever proved its worth in word and deed.
And though the tidings to the shepherds told
Are unfulfilled, again we hear and heed
The hymn the hosts of heaven sang of old—
What time from star to star their hallelujahs
rolled.

Now though we turn with reverence to the past,
And with fond faith its sacred story tell;
Yet have the mists of Mammon o'er us cast
The bane of unbelief, until we dwell
Within the dark indifference of a spell
That Christ himself should come again to break.
That bard were base as he whose cold kiss fell
Upon the Saviour's cheek, did he forsake
The truth for fictioned phrase, or with false fingers
take

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

From out the treasured past one grain of gold
To gild with flattering pen a present pride;
And for the future — no man may behold
And chart the crafty currents of that tide,
Down which it is our destiny to glide
To where across Time's trackless waters roll
The black and baffling mists of Death that
hide
The unknown bourne, which to man's dreaming
soul
Shines ever through the gloom, a hope-created
goal.

The promised peace to earth has never come,
And never will as long as man shall hear
The blaring bugle and the muttering drum
Call him from kith and country on to where
The hosts of Greed and Glory skyward rear
Their crimson-colored banners to his gaze;
The while the lusts of loot and empire sear
His soul to selfish ends and sordid ways
That mock the Star of Peace that did o'er Beth-
lehem blaze.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

Or worse than War's shrill clarion that wakes
The sleeping thunder for some foreign foe,
Is the soul-slaying thirst for gold that slakes
Its craving where far better blood doth flow.
No Roman triumph in the past could show
Captives chained closer to the chariot wheel,
Than Mammon's modern conquerors who
know

No creed but gold, whose hearts can never feel
The peace that passeth all their gluttoned vaults
reveal.

The flesh is more than raiment, and the life
Is more than meat; yet we the truth disdain
And battle ever in the strenuous strife
For what, when won, to ashes oft doth wane.
We labor on with hand and heart and brain,
But at the best we build upon the sand;
The peace we pant for ever doth remain
Beyond the aching heart and outstretched hand,
And seems a myth that man may never under-
stand.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

Beneath the burden of the primal curse

We toil and sweat, but could more bravely
bend

And bear the galling yoke, yea, were it worse,

If we but knew what waits us in the end.

Or if we could back through the ages wend

And hear again the ringing reeds of Pan—

See Cytherea from the waves ascend,

And with the pagan's raptured vision scan

What he beheld of old, we then might bear the
ban.

The gods and myths of Greece have ever flown

From field and mountain and from grove and
stream.

Ah, no! they live; but we ourselves have grown

Blind to the beauty of the splendid dream

That thrall'd man's senses when the unborn
beam

Of Truth's eternal torch in darkness lay;

Before the din of dynamo and steam

Moaned Fancy's dirge and drove us forth to
stray

Far from the pictured night into the dreamless
day.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

Now though the fountain of our faith be dry,
And in Life's waste no cooling stream
appears;

Hark! to the chorus rolling through the sky,
It calls across the desert of the years
And chides our pagan dreams and sceptic
sneers:

For from the lesson of His love we learn
The faith that falters not, the hope that
cheers

Life's darkest hours, and through Him we may
turn

Into the path that leads to that for which we
yearn.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

PROTEAN ZEUS

Into a Satyr did the god degrade
Himself to clasp Antiope an hour;
Then, as a Bull, he figured to deflower
Europa, deemed Phoenicia's fairest maid;
Amphitryon's part he with Alcmena played;
To Danae he seemed a Golden Shower;
In Dian's form Callisto he betrayed,
And as a Flame entered Aegina's bower.

Once where Eurotas' murmuring waters flow,
A frightened Swan sought Leda's sheltering
breast;
In his warm plumage, whiter than the snow,
The crimsoned roses of her cheeks she
pressed: —

From that immortal mingling Helen came,
Whose beauty set the Trojan towers aflame.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

HELEN

These are the eyes in which proud Paris gazed,
When fast across the dark Aegean sea
He fled with Helen, on the night when she
Left Sparta's shore, and Menelaus raised
The rescuing cry; then War's red beacon blazed,
While Greece with all her glorious chivalry
Dashed 'gainst the dauntless Dardan hosts to
free

The fair and faithless woman Homer praised.

Virtue hath rarely worn Fame's glittering crown.
Where are the women of the past who reigned
In spotless robes? Penelope, Lucrece—
Ah God, how few! But Helen's glorious gown
Defies the dust of ages, and though stained
With Passion's grapes, gives glamour unto
Greece.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

PROSERPINA

Daughter of Ceres, throned within the shade
Of Hell's black arches, ever gazing through
The gloom to where, wet with the morning dew,
The violet greets the sun in Enna's glade.
Year after year it flourishes to fade,
But through the mists of time thy face we view,
As fair as when great Pluto paused to woo,
When at thy side his foaming steeds were stayed.

The fragrant fields of sea-girt Sicily,
That bloomed beneath thy feet, have barren
grown
And all the music of her streams is still.
The birds sit mute on every withered tree,
With thistles now that velvet sward is sown,
The winds that wantoned with thy hair are
chill.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

EURYDICE

How Orpheus must have thrilled thy captive soul,
When, facing Dis thy freedom to obtain,
He struck the classic chords, the master strain—
That made rocks reel and rivers backward roll.
Hell's tortured heroes heard his hymns extol
Thy matchless worth, till they forgot their pain,
And turned—one glimpse of thy fair face to
gain,
As after him they saw thee earthward stroll.

Proserpina sat silent while he played,
Then whispered to her lord to set thee free;
Great Pluto nodded, and the gates of hell
Swung swift and wide, while Cerberus obeyed
The taming tune; then Orpheus turned to see
If thou wert safe, and heard thee shriek
"Farewell!"

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

THE PIGMY SHOULDN'T PLAY THE GIANT'S GAME

In these pretentious times when Fortune's walls
Are hung with treasured trophies, which a few
Have with the skill that climbs, the craft that
crawls,

Compelled or cozened from the common crew,
More than we poorer people deem their due,
It might be well to hear them ere we blame,
Remembering while their vices we review,
The pigmy shouldn't play the giant's game.

The slugs and bullets, shells and cannon balls
Which rained as thick as hail at Waterloo
Upon Napoleon's brave, unbeaten Gauls,
Till he a fugitive for safety flew,
Are nothing now; though only five-foot-two,
A place among the Titans he can claim;
The brain counts, not the body, well he knew
The pigmy shouldn't play the giant's game.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

Peace hath, like War, her battles and her brawls,
Crops have been cornered often ere they grew;
The market rises and the market falls,
The Fates have favored many a curious coup;
Plutus hath guided many a gamester through
His glittering heaps, and taught him how to frame
The fortune, that — from nothing — millions
drew;

The pigmy shouldn't play the giant's game.

The posing of an actor sometimes palls,
But here his talent we shall not taboo;
For when he swaggers through the Thespian halls,
And plays the part of Hamlet or the Jew,
Or of Petruchio, whom the sullen shrew
Defied while he her temper tried to tame,
The mimic may this maxim then eschew—
The pigmy shouldn't play the giant's game.

ENVOY

Prince, I'm a laggard at this rendezvous;
I met my Muse, a most exacting dame,
Who said, 'twas vain such verses to pursue—
The pigmy shouldn't play the giant's game.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

TO RUDYARD KIPLING

(Double Ballade)

When Triton's thrilling trumpet tone
Sang first across the restless blue,
From East to West, from zone to zone,
Such witchery o'er the waves he threw,
That Orpheus from his lute ne'er drew
Such music for the rocks and trees,
As that which o'er the billows flew,
O Singer of the Seven Seas!

That sounding shell was shoreward thrown
To thee by Amphitrite, who
Now hears across her surges blown,
The thrilling notes she loved and knew
Long, long ago; but there were few
Who ever sang such songs as these—
Which on thy lips ring loud and true,
O Singer of the Seven Seas!

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

These broad, blue tides we call our own,
Methinks should have another hue,
For in their deadly deeps is sown
The flesh of many a fearless crew;
Though for our Admiralty we strew
To shore and shark the fullest fees,
Still "Give us more!" the surges sue,
O Singer of the Seven Seas!

Not for the "Meteor Flag" alone,
Dost thou all other song eschew;
We hear the Liner's engines groan,
We feel the Freighter's "bucking screw,"
The Derelict drifts past our view—
Scoffed by the surge, mocked by the breeze.
Storm-driven, battered and perdu;
O Singer of the Seven Seas!

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

Yet not alone old Ocean's moan
Thy many measures doth imbue;
To sing the soldier thou art prone;
Thy ringing rhymes are a tattoo;
When Tommy Atkins walks askew,
Or stands at anything but ease,
He gets from thee the proper cue,
O Singer of the Seven Seas!

Familiar forms again are shown,
Nor would we from this verse taboo
The "Rag and Hank of Hair and Bone"
We knew her well, the shallow shrew!
And wonder how we came to woo
And swear our love on bended knees;
But long ago we said Adieu,
O Singer of the Seven Seas!

ENVOY

This somewhat sorry ambigu
Smacks of the ballade's strict decrees;
Our Muse dislikes the stern gooroo,
O Singer of the Seven Seas!

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

WE MUST SIT SILENT WHEN THE DEVIL DRIVES

Of all the sayings and the saws we hear—
The precepts and the proverbs—new or old—
While many fall like folly on the ear,
A few are weighted well with Wisdom's gold,
And oft some philosophic treasure hold.
Their little homilies guide many lives;
When over smooth or rocky roadways rolled,
We must sit silent when the devil drives.

When through the gloom the lights of home
appear,
To welcome us across the wind-swept wold;
When 'round the blazing hearth we gather near—
Safe-shielded from the tempest and the cold;
Then, while some song is sung or story told,
Fate, from the freezing world without, arrives
And like a wolf glares on the sheltered fold;
We must sit silent when the devil drives.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

The future may be faced without a fear;
If through the past not blindly we have strolled,
It often lends a light to lead us where—
Havened in peace—our hearts shall be consoled;
Though Destiny by Fate is oft controlled,
Yet when the heart upholds the hand that strives,
Fortune and Fame may be o'er Failure scrolled,
Though we sit silent when the devil drives.

ENVOY

Prince, many a man for years has been cajoled
And buffeted by Fate, and still survives;
But till we slumber softly in the mould,
We must sit silent when the devil drives.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

GIVE A BEGGAR A HORSE AND HE'LL GALLOP TO HELL

Give a pauper a purse that is bursting with gold,
And the meats and the music, the women and
wine

You will soon in a profligate pageant behold,
For he cannot to Luxury's limits confine
The ambition that burns in his blood to out-
shine

Even lavish Lucullus—whom none could excel.

There is truth in the phrase, there is lore in the
line—

Give a beggar a horse and he'll gallop to hell.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

He may rot in his rags, he may freeze in the cold,
He may snore in the sewer, or crib with the
kine,

He may crunch the hard crust that is charity-
doled,

He may share—like the prodigal—husks with
the swine;

All of Poverty's curses may in him combine,
Till the dogs that licked Lazarus 'gainst him
rebel;

But I say it again, though the saying's not
mine—

Give a beggar a horse and he'll gallop to hell.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

Ah, what pictures the portals of Pluto unfold!

What diversions the devil delights to design!
When the clattering hoofs of the courser controlled

By the pauper are heard on the easy incline;
Then Old Nick doesn't take very long to divine
Who is riding so fast, for he knows the pace well,
And awaits with a welcome both warm and benign;

Give a beggar a horse and he'll gallop to hell.

ENVOY

You must pardon me, Prince, if this envoy enshrine

The sad lady whom Pluto took with him to dwell;

But to fry in the flame near the fair Proserpine,
Give a beggar a horse and he'll gallop to hell.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

THE SWOON

I have swooned nigh to death in those white arms
of thine,

Till the trance that enthralled me hath grown
To a dream where the glories of heaven were
mine,

Then have waked on thy bosom to own
That the seraphs who stroll through the regions
above,

Never know the rare bliss that I feel
When I wander with thee where the labyrinths
of love

Their most exquisite raptures reveal.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

I have looked on the stars till my listening ears
Have been filled with the strains of the blest;
But my soul a more eloquent harmony hears
In the dreams that I dream on thy breast.
'Tis the low, blissful beat of a heart that replies
With a passionate love unto mine;
'Tis the melody heard in thy murmuring sighs
When my being is blending with thine.

I have walked where the demons of sorrow and
pain
Mock the memories of happier days;
I have drunk the dark dregs of despair that
remain
In the cup of the love that betrays;
But thy lips—like the breath of a spring that is
fled—
In my heart have awakened once more
All the glorious dreams of a day that is dead,
And its peace and its passion restore.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

THE TEARFUL TROTH

It is a tale that has been often told,
The story of a love that leaps to life
And blooms in beauty, though a dark distrust
Lurks ever near to menace and destroy.

It is the legend of the love that lives
Through doubting days and through the harrow-
ing hours
Of long and lonely nights; a love that dreams
Of unforgettable and feverish things
That burn within the blood and bring again
The memory of the murmured midnight vow,
When mutual, melting lips were wont to tell
The thrilling and—perhaps—the tearful troth.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

Ah, fair and fond, low-voiced and lovely-limbed,
Made of the classic clay that wakens men
To valorous deeds, or drugs them with desire,
Until they dream that lust and love are one—
From dawn to dark I see thy faultless face,
And through the night it haunts me, till I feel
That I could gladly give my life to live
One brief, ambrosial hour on thy white breast.

The memories of the past cannot outweigh
A world of present woe; I feel as one,
Who—worn and wearied in a wilderness,
Wherein no fountain springs or food is found—
Dreams of the glorious days that once were his—
The feast, the flagon, and the flowers and fruit—
And hears again the mocking melody
Of one familiar, unforgotten voice.

So in my dreams I sometimes feel the lips
That kissed away my cares and chained my soul
Within a charm that time can never break,
Then wake to wonder if I ever steal
Into thy thoughts as thou dost into mine.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

THESE DREARY DAYS

These dreary days, how dark they seem,
But from their gloom I often stray
To greet thee in a glorious dream.
These dreary days, how dark they seem,
But through the clouds there bursts a beam
Prophetic of a brighter day.
These dreary days, how dark they seem,
But from their gloom I often stray.

When thou wert by my side, the hours
Were lit with Love's enrapturing light;
Now dark are these abandoned bowers.
When thou wert by my side, the hours
Crowned me with Love's unfading flowers
That separation cannot blight.
When thou wert by my side, the hours
Were lit with Love's enrapturing light.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

Soon there will dawn a day when we
 Shall meet again, no more to part;
I dream of all the bliss to be.
Soon there will dawn a day when we
In one another's eyes shall see
 The love now hidden in each heart.
Soon there will dawn a day when we
 Shall meet again, no more to part.

Our souls shall then together blend;
 Yea, even now I speed through space.
This hour my way to thee I'll wend,
Our souls shall then together blend,
And Love unto my heart shall lend
 The rapture of thy blest embrace.
Our souls shall then together blend;
 Yea, even now I speed through space.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

PHRYNE

(A Dream)

When thou wert with me in the waking hours
Of those delirious, but degrading days,
Now gone forever; or when on my breast,
Pillowed in slumber, thy fair cheek was laid—
Whether it was that each enchanted sense
Was drugged so deeply with thy sorcery,
Or whether thy warm lips in whispers low,
Unheard by me, murmured unto my heart
“Why dream of me, when I am by thy side?”
I cannot say; but through those after hours—
The sequent drowsy intervals, when love
Languished a little ere it waked again—
I never saw thy face come to console
Or mock me in my sleep as now, when I
Turn in the dark with dream-deluded lips
To kiss the pillow pressed by thee no more.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

Sometimes as fair as Eos, when she flings
The sombre curtains of the night apart,
To beam in beauty on a sleeping world,
Dost thou appear to me; yea, I have felt
The pressure and the passion of thy lips,
And almost heard thee whisper as of old.

* * * * *

One night I dreamt that I was one among
A multitude of people gathered in
The city Cecrops founded; there I saw
A spacious place, circled with shrines and fanes,
Ornate with chiseled treasures that were brought
From classic shades to crown a pagan rite
With a reflected glory of the day
That dawned when Aphrodite trod the seas.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

In the mute language that the dreamer speaks,
I questioned one who stood near me, to learn
The meaning of the mighty concourse there;
He pointed to an empty pedestal
Standing between two sculptured effigies
Of foam-born Cytherea; one revealed
A carved conceit of unimpassioned Love,
The other was a marble dream of Lust.

Upon the right, the chaste Ourania sat,
A milk-white dove upon her whiter breast,
And on her brow the sacred myrtle leaves.
While on the left, Euploea stood as when
The Cnidian youth stole to her in the dark,
And stained her snowy bosom with the blood
Of lips that crushed her marble mouth in vain.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

Then mystic hymns, such as are only heard
In the domain of an englamouring dream,
Rolled from the opening portals of a fane,
In which a throng of priestesses appeared,
Led by a priest; a woman with them walked,
Hooded and masked, garbed in a purple robe
That swept the shining tiles on which she trod
With slow and stately step, until she came
And paused in silence at the vacant plinth.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

Then did the priest proclaim that she was one
In whom the best and basest elements
Mingled together in a breast on which
E'en Zeus himself had been content to rest.
He also told that listening host that she
Possessed the "cestus" Cytherea wore—
The conquering charm that no man may resist.
He said it was a flavor of the flesh,
Found only in a few, and only when
Some face, some form, and, it may be, some voice
Combine with it to kindle in the blood
The rabies of a desperate desire.
He said as well, she loved to worship in
Pandemos' shrine, then wander forth to give
The sailormen of Salamis her lips.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

Then turning from that eager throng to her,
And pointing to the plinth, he said, "Ascend,
Let us behold the breathing beauty which
In after ages man shall turn to see,
But through the dim, deluding mists of time;
For thou art one of those who have the power
To prompt the chisel and the brush and pen,
And gain an undeserved, but deathless fame."

Still masked and robed, she in an instant scaled
The waiting pedestal, where she remained
A mystery for a moment, but no more;
For at a sign, the robe slipped from her form,
The hood dropped off, the mask was flung aside,
And Phryne stood in faultless beauty there.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

The marble miracle of Phidias—
The chaste Ourania—seemed to shrink away.
The people cried with an applauding voice,
“Euploea! O Euploea!” for they saw
In Phryne’s form the living counterpart
Of one whose Parian beauty never paled,
Until it met its breathing prototype—
The matchless mistress of Praxiteles.

Then silence followed; as I looked on her,
Methought I saw a likeness unto thee,
And cried thy name aloud; a thousand tongues
Chorused my cry and claimed thee as their own.
Then in the clamor I awoke to find
The dream as fleeting as thy faithless love.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

THE CROWNING CHARM

It is because the truth is on thy lips
That thou art dear to me.
Thy candor and thy confidence eclipse
All other charms in thee.
Though thou art crowned with grace and beauty,
dear,
A better boon is thine:
It is the heart that held no faltering fear
When it confessed to mine.

I learn from thee the courage that can cast
A scrutinizing beam
Upon the sombre spectres of the past,
Till, like a dismal dream,
They fade away and in their caverns cower
Before my fearless gaze;
Yea, love has given unto me the power
To laugh at other days.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

It is no wonder then that on thy breast

I find the longed-for goal,

Which through a waste of years hath been the
quest

Of an o'erwearied soul.

But I have reached at last the oasis

I dreamed of in my youth,

And drink the passion of thy peerless kiss,

The sweeter for its truth.

FROM CRYPT AND CHOIR

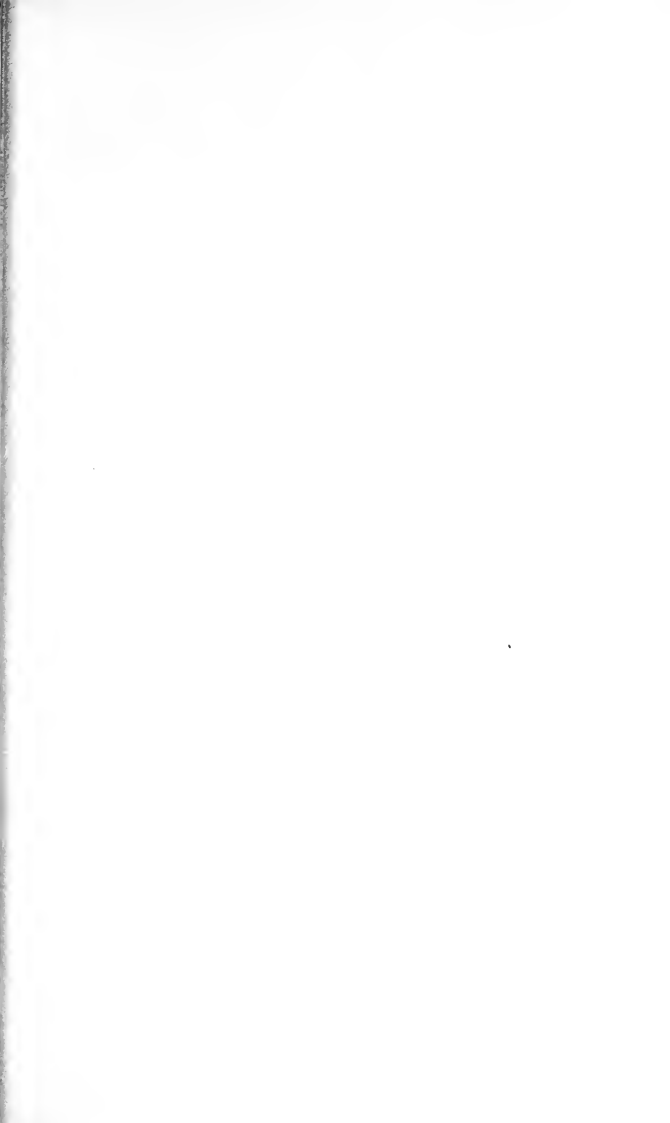
HAPPY DAYS

There is no music like the merry clink
Of glasses, when some fair one's health we drink;
There is no toast more fitting than the phrase
My mistress murmurs, it is "Happy Days!"

Wet with the wine, her red lips part to show
Pearls that are whiter than the winter snow;
The amber beads that sparkle in the glass,
Blush crimson as her rose-leaf lips they pass.

The Mirth, the Music, and the Wit, and Wine
With whispered kiss and dreaming eyes combine
And kindle in my heart the love that lights
The way from happy days to heavenly nights.

Oh, heavenly nights! An arctic winter were
Too short to linger by the side of her
Whose lips would make it seem a night in June—
On whose brief bliss the dawn would break too
soon.





PRESS NOTICES

SOME PRESS NOTICES

of

"The Dead Calypso," "Beyond the Requiems"
and "Cloistral Strains."

Last night before retiring, I read again for the third or fourth time that powerful poem "Ataxia." What imagination! What realism! It stirred every fibre of my nature, awakened every quality and every faculty, and mixed all night with all my thoughts and fancies. If a piece of self-revelation, it is awful; anyway it is a super-Byronic production — creation. — Addison P. Russell, Author of "A Club of One."

There is good poetry in this book; some of the verses being of great strength and originality. —Boston "Times," November 10, 1901.

Louis A. Robertson's book, "The Dead Calypso," made him a singer of national note. —New York "World," January 24, 1903.

PRESS NOTICES

A notable feature of the work of this Golden State poet is the near approach to perfection of his poetry. He avoids false quantity, and the tone of each poem is sustained from beginning to end, so that one is constrained to follow it to its conclusion.—Buffalo "Courier," December, 1902.

Some of Louis A. Robertson's sonnets are equal to the best in the English language.—San Francisco "Bulletin."

He seems on the whole the most promising of the literary group.—Chicago "Inter-Ocean," December 30, 1901.

Among the many who made their first appearance, Louis A. Robertson, who wrote "The Dead Calypso," is probably the best.—Baltimore "Sun," December 26, 1901.

The collection throughout shows the hand of a master, and is sure to be welcomed as a real contribution to the poetic literature of our country.—Trenton, N. J., "Times," February 21, 1902.

PRESS NOTICES

Louis A. Robertson is one poet of the day whose poetry can be read more than once.—San Francisco "Post," December 13, 1902.

"Cloistral Strains" places Louis A. Robertson amongst the foremost and most divine of poets.—San Jose "Mercury," December 6, 1902.

Mr. Robertson's work is all of a high literary order. This California poet has already won recognition in England and other countries as well as California.—Boston "Beacon," December 24, 1902.

The work opens with a challenging call to that once fascinating goddess, and in a metre almost as seductive as the smile of the siren it taunts. The book is full of good verse. Mr. Robertson is a poet, and the West is the better for him.—Chicago "Record-Herald," December 28, 1904.

The melody of the verse is as notable as the warmth of its fancy.—New York "Times."

PRESS NOTICES

The book has fire and grit in it. It has also much tenderness and sadness. It runs the gamut from the most spiritual aspiration to the rage of desire defeated in satiation. In the matter of form all the verses are exquisitely done. In the matter of feeling the intensity is poignant. Always the song has color to it, has blood and bone and flesh woven through it. Mr. Robertson is a lover of the sonnet, and his book contains a dozen poems in that form that are of exquisite workmanship.—St. Louis "Mirror," October 10, 1901.

There are poems in this volume of noble range. Robertson is certainly a purist, and has a thorough knowledge of the technique of poetry. He is never guilty of false quantity, nor does he ever lower the tone from its original setting. His work has received recognition in the East and England, and there is an increasing demand for the work of this extraordinary California poet. Louis Alexander Robertson is one of the few poets of the day whose work can be read more than once.—San Francisco "Post," December 13, 1901.

PRESS NOTICES

Mr. Robertson's lines reveal the faculty of making the old mythology real. Like Keats, he fuses his thought into an imaginative glow that makes the fables of Greece and Rome live again for us of these prosaic days. Those who feel the sway of his passion will recognize the hand of a master.—San Francisco "Chronicle," August 11, 1901.

His verses show the hand of a man of great literary attainments; a man whose mentality has been cultivated to the highest pitch, and yet whose soul is, and ever has been, the soul of a born poet. In expression and form Mr. Robertson's verses are in themselves perfect; yet this mechanical excellence, if we may so express it, attracts no attention to itself. The lines run so smoothly and the thoughts are so beautifully expressed, that it is the intent of the poetry, and not its form, that makes the lasting impression on the reader's mind.—San Francisco "Call," August 18, 1901.

The beauty of the lines is most often that of the polished and engraved gem, yet his thought

PRESS NOTICES

moves freely and gives no hint of fetters.—San Francisco "Argonaut," August 26, 1901.

In this book there are verses that thrill the senses and stir the blood and awake one's enthusiasm and cause one to read and reread; there are lines that impress one with their beauty as a faultless piece of statuary, and there are some that cut the air with the swing of a flaming scimitar. His songs come to us in many strains, and through the sob of lascivious music and the flow of forbidden wine there steals the echo of the swelling choir and the impressive cadence of the cathedral hymn, chanted in a key that harmonizes well with the dim religious lights.—San Francisco "News Letter," August 10, 1901.

His lines oft glow with brilliant pictures; they unfold grand scenes; tableau after tableau presents itself in brilliant, pulsating coloring. This is particularly true of the poem "The Dead Calypso." The scenes painted are the work of a master of the English language.—San Francisco "Bulletin," August 18, 1901.







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